5/24/71

Dear Js,

Wish I'd had a chance to write you a couple of days sooner. As my crossed letter shows, I'd feared you might feel compelled to answer when you didn't have time. However, I also confess I'm glad, for some of the enclosures are quite valuable and the others are just plain valuable.

You are correct in assuming that I did not know of the Atlanta postmark. It has a number of significances, and I can't yet decide which. Although, as you will see, I had and cast doubt on the identity of the driver, this could be corroboration of his statement to me that he was. However, and particularly in view of the fact that he didn't tell me of this lm owing I had doubted he was, it can also be taken as an indication that it had been mailed by someone with access to his possession and mailed to make it seem that he was there. This is exceptionally honest in its statement of doubts for AP. As you will also see, Gavzer did what I regard as first-rate work and so credit him. I regard that as significant because his career of JFK-assassination writing is from a bordello.

The three stories on Ray's attempted break help because they add to the existing discrepancies of the official accounting of that, that is, in taking credit for the discoveery, who actually discovered, ets. Some indicate a possible buildup in officialdom for the new warden. Jimmie had been quite diffident in writing of it. Said it was of no importance and then, in a way that might have passed undetected through a hasty reading, said what I interpret to mean exactly the opposite. The new commissioner of corrections went out of his way to say his new warden is the hero, which I very much doubt, but which may help make it possible for a tough warden to get away with being tougher.

I did not have the NYTimes 4/2/69 story on Hanes (and how I wish I had access to a list of his and Huie's appearances). It is significant to me in a way it might not be to you. Under oath, in a deposition in Ray's civil suit, he did everything but say that Huie rewrote his Look piece. It seems that Huie paid them, not Look. At least, if not that, acted as Look's agent, but I think the former. Huie protested he was not an editor of Look, which is at beast an evasion. And it indicates that Hanes, as soon as the piece was out and when appearing under Look's auspices, took issue with what appeared under his name. (I think I have the answer to a question you will find in the book, what Hanes got to give up his contractual rights, but I won't tell you until after you've read it. Remind me.)

The 3/15/69 Times piece on the CA decision is fascinating and may also be of legal significance, as I'll let the lawyers know. The part that intrigues me is that on which you do not comment, the abdicated lawyer and the alleged associates of the accused. The parallels ought be obvious. It fortifies my hunch.

Hal has not been able to reach Eason. He said he'd try through Harv. His phone was to be connected this week. I presume the partial transcript if of his personal comments. There is no real mystery of the arrests, although there seems to be. What causes this is official dishonesty and greed for "credit". But I played it the same way, only in more detail, because the question is reasonable and viable and should not exist. This makes his silence less comprehensible. Dunbar you are right. Spann has been an exception with me, but I did reach his producer (who is also Dunbars) and no call-back. Long ago, too.

UPI Joesten story is something I'll take to DC next time and ask UPI if one has to go out of the seat of government to get a legit story on the wire if it does not favor the govt. When they give Joesten attention, who hasn't earned credibility?

Your Mardi Gras opinions confirm my own fears. It would have to be handled with an undeviating lightnessm of approach and style that are foreign to me, too. Yet at some

point something like this will have to be done or we'll never have credibility again. Garrison has just taped a Merv Griffin show, and I shudder to think of it. I'll also not be looking at it, for I'll be working or asleep. I've written about 15,000-20,000 words of AGENT OSWALD, two long chapters than can be broken down as a submission. The second is not complete, the first retyped. I'd not be riting this now but after so long a period of late bedding and early rising I just had to lay down this p.m. and there isn't enough time before supper to pick it up again. Not intended as unflattering!

When I trod your native turf so ,ong ago, the aged lawyer with whom I went carried the one weapon we had between us, a very small pocket knife. So, we avoided the Briahs. If they grow as those we found on moving here, wow. I've had them 50 feet long and ruining beautiful trees. As by now you know, I'd written Hal about a column he downgraded on the bird, suggesting it not be downgraded and method of pursuing further.

Don't knock yourself out getting the Dorman book, and if it intrudes into the limited time you have for reading, skip it. But I would value your opinions and what you see just might trigger some recollections. To this point we are on complete agreements on possibilities.

Encouraging to know the mail has improved, especially letters mailed from elsewhere. Now that Lil is not working and I'm not taking her in town in the a.m., I do not get the mail at the p.o. and I do not save the outgoing mail for then. We have none until 9 p.m., and I drive into town to make the first of the night's departures, which helps speed it by a day. If I mail it in the a.m., unless I've written very early, the latest enclosure will be of the day before. Tomorrow I have to go into town and will send anything ready then and, unless there is something urgent, will not go into town again. I'll be away the last part of the week, with a fool for a client.

On the electronics: I've already taken your unanticipated advice, there being no real Sony dealer here, only jewelry stores that can order from them. I've ordered their special plugs, having profited from your earlier advice, and will then take all to the local shop. Input and output on the Concord take the standard earphone-size plug, and I have enough extra earphones to supply them.

On F-U, now that you have read the first three or four chapters, I ask a general questions: is there anything you found jarring in them and if so what. The editing there was extensive. I have my own theory which I do not give you, thus you'll not feed back.

My God! your subway construction is interminable.It was a problem the night I feel asleep before you got home. And that was 2½ years ago. Elder sold to Brentanos owing me money I'll now never get. Each time I was there I spoke to the bookkeeper and each time I was asked for and sent papers.

Kuttner was here, did almost an hour instead of the planned ½, which means it will not be in the planed slot. I have always found it strange that to now only Bill O'Connell in LA ever had any interest in me. I did approach BAI in the past. Negative. I think this is now changed...Dellums silence on the book puzzles. He has been getting excellent press and exceptional DC TV attention...Kerry's magnificent appearance was also done in full by the educational net, which is also cool to me. The Washington station refused to air anything on F-U, and previously the American Univ station, their then local outlet, had. Intellectuals! I expect to see more of Kuttner. The reason he came here (I approached him when he was in NY during the move) is because he is spending most of his time in DC. They have a two-"man" staff, the other a Margo Adler who did (which may mean no more than reading) news in NY. She and others there had read the book. K hadn't at time on interview.

Your suggestions re publisher are not new, everybody else being pretty explicit in expressing the same opinion. There is a basis for it nobody knows. I tend to believe it is the melding of incompetence, arrogance, ego on the part of the one who is supposed to handle such things, plus their lack of cash. I have not yet gotten the second part of the "advance", although when I press for instalments to meet immediate emergencies, I eventually get them. The most suspicious thing of all is their first rpinting of much less than required to meet the cost of the advance. That was really crazy if innocent, for the going-back-to-press cost is great. And suppose they have to pay me the advance anyway? I really dp not know the answer. As I put it to them, if they had sold out after contracting, could they have performed differently? Their stupidities are such that I can take the book away from them at any time, I am confident. But no purpose would be served, since there is nothing I could do with it. The contract does call for me to get the negatives and plates and first crack at the remainders. So, at the rathe they are going, this may happen anyway and I ll h ave paid for them with the unpaid "advance". Then, if there is a break, the book will be mine. I think I reflect my expectations on further promos, not one of which they arranged and some of which they opposed, in resuming writing and on a different subject. (Boy! could I use an editor-in-residence to edit the rought before Lil retypes and to cool me a bit. Somfar in this it is moderate , perhaps because I've never been as weary in my life. And the stuff itself is that hot. I think this can make a great book. I fear another enormity, I have that much. And it will be another non-fiction detective story. What, despite the depressing effect on sales, assuming publication, I'd like to do is have in a vast appendix every single FBI report I quote, every one of Hoover's letters, each of the staff memos, etc. And when I submit these two "chapters" every doc will accompany. Today, thanks to Media, there should be a market for anything with the FBI letterhead. But, were this to be done, the docs alone would be longer than F-U. And in doing the initial writing, not knowing what, if any, market there will be, I have to do it completely, as I see it, to make the full, historical record. Then, if there is commercial interest, the cutting would be the big job, and as I generally do these things, it can be done by hunks rather than sentences.)

To conclude, I have an executive editor interested but he can't get the decision-maker to believe the subject is not dead, including commercially. I'm having to be my own agent, which is not good. Not is it good that these chapters will not be as brief as they could be, but I can't keep rewriting, so I'm taking the chance that there will be enough interest to read, perhaps stimulated by all the accompanying official documents, some marked "TOP SECRET" and none stolen.

Lil is late calling me to supper. Best to you both, and please don't feel pressed to answer, ever. Nobody ought ever keep the hours I do, and there is no other way for you to keep up, so don't try. I don't expect it.

Best regards,